



Circulation, Transfer and Adaptation of Knowledge, Norms and Techniques in Environmental History between Europe and the Americas (17th-20th centuries)

Hosted by the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies at the
School of Global Policy and Strategy, UC San Diego

April 15, 2016 | Malamud Conference Room, Institute of the Americas, UC San Diego

This workshop will discuss the internationalization of environmental knowledge, focusing on the creation, transmission, circulation and adaptation of expertise, norms, experience and technological innovations in Europe and Mexico and the Americas between the 17th and 20th centuries. We know that the making and circulation of knowledge rests on praxis, observation and experience. Discussions will reflect on the extent to which some contexts are more or less receptive to innovation, and the ways in which certain needs might facilitate the transmission and circulation of technical knowledge. Panels will take stock of the state of the debate on the production and circulation of environmental knowledge, offering new conceptual tools and approaches to the study of environmental transformation and scientific practice in Mexico and the rest of Latin America, stressing the central role played by European and North American laws, theoretical knowledge and techniques.

We seek to deepen our understanding of European and extra-European knowledge encounter brought on by ecological imperialism and thus problematize, critique and transform the center-periphery model long in use by the History of Sciences. Colonial science has proven to be a hybrid process between European and local praxis, rather than the extension of the European model. In some cases, overseas colonies served as global labs where European scientists could confirm their theories. European science conveyed the language and logics which became the grounds for global science and the unique valid form of knowledge, making European science a key factor of European cultural imperialism. This is the foremost important topic of discussion for this workshop. In examining these questions, panels will engage considerations of both the circulation and acquisition of environmental knowledge, laws, and techniques in the New World, as well as the obstacles and constraints to environmental knowledge circulation

Agenda

Thursday, April 14th

6:30 pm Opening Dinner at Sbicca | 215 15th Street, Del Mar, CA, 92104

Friday, April 15th | Malamud Conference Room, Institute of the Americas, UC San Diego

9 – 9:30 am Breakfast & Welcome



9:30 – 10 am	Opening Keynote: Cristina Rivera Garza , UC San Diego
10 am – 12 pm	Session 1: Hydraulics and Irrigation Transfers “A peculiar review of a few concepts and words useful to understand material knowing and doing in the watery realms of early modern colonization” Vera Candiani , Princeton University “Damming Sonora: Towards an environmental and Social History of Water in Sonora, Mexico in the Twentieth Century” Sterling Evans , University of Oklahoma “Urban Ecology, Global Science, and the Rise of Environmentalist Technocracy in Mexico City” Matthew Vitz , UC San Diego Discussant: Casey Walsh , UC Santa Barbara
12 – 1 pm	Lunch
1 – 3 pm	Session 2: Forestry and Deforestation “From Productivism to Consumerism in the Vanishing Woods” Christopher Boyer , University of Illinois at Chicago “The Changing Place of Trees in Hydro-Climatological Thought and Practice in Colonial Mexico: Local Knowledge, Ecological Crises and Creole Science” Brad Skopyk , Binghamton University “Mexican Mountain Communities and their changing landscapes during the Nineteenth Century” Alejandro Tortolero , Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, UC San Diego “How Coal Kept My Valley Green: Deforestation and the Transition to Fossil Fuels in the Valley of Mexico, 1850-1930” German Vergara , Brown University Discussant: Emily Wakild , Boise State University
3 – 3:30 pm	Break
3:30– 5:30 pm	Session 3: Science and Environment “The Biological Old Regimes of the Mediterranean and MesoAmerica: Environmental Processes and Medicinal Mergers” Paula de Vos , San Diego State University



“John Muir and ‘Muirism’ in the Amazon: The Man, Planning, and Conservation Controversies in the American Tropics”

Susanna Hecht, UCLA

“Fixing the Type: Sheep Breeding in Southern Patagonia and New Zealand, 1880-1920”

John Soluri, Carnegie Mellon University

Discussant: **Stuart McCook**, University of Guelph

5:30 – 6 pm

Closing Remarks: **Eric Van Young**, UC San Diego

6 – 7 pm

Reception at Mustangs and Burros, Estancia La Jolla Hotel

Participant Bios

Christopher Boyer is Professor of History and Latin American and Latino Studies. He teaches classes on modern Mexican history, Latin American studies, and environmental history, with an occasional foray into anthropology. Boyer’s scholarship is located at the crossroads of the social and environmental history of Modern Mexico. His recent book “Political Landscapes: Forests, Communities, and Conservation in Mexico” investigates conflicts and alliances between forestry experts, timber interests, and indigenous communities in Mexican forests over the past 120 years. His articles have appeared in the *Hispanic American Historical Review*, *Historia Mexicana*, the *American Historical Review*, and several edited volumes published in the United States and Mexico.

A Native of Argentina, Dr. **Vera Candiani** studied at University of California at Berkeley. The focus of her work centers on the area in which social, economic and environmental history intersect with the history of technology.

Paula De Vos is Associate Professor of History at San Diego State University. Her research interests lie in both colonial Mexico and early modern history of science and medicine. Her current book project, which has received support from the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Institutes of Health, and, most recently, a 2016 Summer Stipend from the National Endowment for the Humanities, concerns the history of pharmacy, chemistry, natural history, and medicine in colonial Mexico. She has published several articles on the relationship between science and politics in the Spanish Empire in venues that include *Journal of World History*, *Colonial Latin American Review*, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, and *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*.

Sterling Evans holds the Louise Welsh Chair in History at the University of Oklahoma. He has research interests in the history of the trans-national Great Plains, the U.S.-Mexican and U.S.-Canadian borderlands, agricultural history, and environmental history. He is the author of “Bound in Twine: The History and Ecology of the Henequen-Wheat Complex for Mexico and the American and Canadian Plains, 1880-1950” and “The Green Republic: A Conservation History of Costa Rica”, and is currently completing the book “Damming Sonora: Water, Agriculture, and Environmental Change in Northwest Mexico”.



Susanna Hecht is Professor in UCLA's Luskin School of Public Affairs in Regional and International Development; and Environmental Analysis and Policy. She holds additional appointments in the Institute of Environment and the Department of Geography. Dr. Hecht is a specialist in land use change in the Latin American tropics, especially Amazonia. She has explored the drivers of tropical deforestation including the politics of land speculation in the livestock sector, the rise and politics of agroindustrial soy systems. Her work, however has also focused on alternatives to deforestation and into the "Social Lives of Forests". She has just finished a volume called the "Scramble for the Amazon and the Lost Paradise of Euclides da Cunha" about global imperialism, and "wars at the end of the world" at the end of the 19th century as Europe and western hemispheric aspirants vied for control over gold fields and rubber forests in Amazonia.

Professor **Stuart McCook** received a BA in History & Science from the University of Toronto and both an MA and a PhD from Princeton University. He has been a member of University of Guelph's History Department since 2003. His research focuses on the environmental history of tropical crops and commodities, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Professor McCook examines the interplay between the economy and the environment by studying the origins of epidemic crop diseases. Currently, his research project is the global history of the coffee rust (*Hemileia vastatrix*), a catastrophic crop epidemic that spread across the world's coffee zones between 1870 and 1980.

Cristina Rivera-Garza is the award-winning author of six novels, three collections of short stories, five collections of poetry and three non-fiction books. She is the Breeden Eminent Scholar at Auburn University and a fellow at the UCSD Center for Humanities fall 2015. She received a Senate Grant from UCSD and the prestigious three-year Sistema Nacional de Creadores grant from Mexico. She was born in Mexico (Matamoros, Tamaulipas, 1964), and has lived in the United States since 1989. She studied urban sociology at the National Autonomous University of Mexico and received her PhD in Latin American history from the University of Houston.

Brad Skopyk is an Assistant Professor in the History Department at Binghamton University, State University of New York. He studies colonial Mexican history, mainly of Central Mexico, exploring the intersection of spatial, climatic, economic and environmental themes. He has a forthcoming article in *Environment and History* that uses climate history to makes sense of hydrological anomalies in colonial Mexico. He is working on a book manuscript that picks up on, and expands upon, this theme. It is tentatively titled "Colonial Cataclysms: Climate, Landscape and Memory in Post-Conquest Central Mexico."

John Soluri is Associate Professor in the Department of History at Carnegie Mellon University. His research and teaching explore the relationship between social and environmental change in Latin America with a particular focus on the commodification of biological organisms. He is currently researching and writing a book centered on animals, markets, borders, and environmental change in Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego (1800-2000). His book, "Banana Cultures: Agriculture, Consumption, and Environmental Change in Honduras and the United States" (2005) won the George Perkins Marsh award for best book awarded by the American Society for Environmental History.

Alejandro Tortolero Villaseñor is professor of history at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Iztapalapa. He received his doctorate from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris. Tortolero Villaseñor has held visiting professorships in Berlin, Paris, Seville, Costa Rica, Buenos Aires, Toulouse and Harvard University. In addition, he earned a Guggenheim Fellowship and received the



Premio Nacional de Investigación in social sciences from the Mexican Academy of Sciences. Tortolero Villaseñor's specialties include the agricultural, environmental and economic history of Mexico. He is the author of three monographs, including his most recent work, "Notarios y Agricultores. Crecimiento y atraso en el campo mexicano, 1780-1920," published in 2009.

A historian of colonial Mexico by training, **Eric Van Young** has written on rural economic history (especially the history of haciendas) and regions in Mexico. In the mid-1980s his interest turned to the history of popular groups in the Mexican independence struggle (1810 - 1821), on which he published a book in 2001. Dr. Van Young received a BA with Honors at the University of Chicago and both his MA and PhD from UC Berkeley. Currently, he is in the research phase for a biography of Lucas Alaman, 19th-century Mexican statesman, entrepreneur, and historian, within the larger context of post-independence political culture.

German Vergara currently holds a postdoctoral fellowship in environmental history at Brown University. She specializes in Modern Latin America and her research has focused on the environmental, energy, social, and cultural history of Mexico. She is particularly interested in the relationship between industrialization, energy sources, and environmental change in nineteenth and twentieth-century Mexico. Her dissertation, "Fueling Change: The Valley of Mexico and the Quest for Energy, 1850-1930," examines how and why Mexico City and its hinterland transitioned from an energy regime based on local, renewable sources such as water and wood to one dependent on fossil fuels such as coal and oil.

Matthew Vitz received his Ph.D. in Latin American and Caribbean History from New York University in 2010. His doctoral research on the modern environmental history of Mexico City was supported by a Fulbright scholarship and an ACLS/Mellon Dissertation Completion Fellowship. Since completing his Ph.D., he has been Visiting Assistant Professor at Dartmouth College, a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies at UC San Diego, and a fellow at the prestigious Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas (Institute of Historical Research) at the UNAM in Mexico City. Professor Vitz has published his research in the *Hispanic American Historical Review* as well as *Estudios de Historia Moderna y Contemporánea de México* and has a forthcoming article in *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos*.

Emily Wakild earned her M.A. and Ph.D. in Latin American History from the University of Arizona in Tucson and a B.A. in History and Politics from Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. She is currently a member of the Boise State University Department of History Faculty, as a historian of Latin America. Her research interests include the social and environmental history of revolution in Latin America, the comparative history of conservation and science, and cultural understandings of climate history. For this work, she has been awarded several national awards including a National Science Foundation Scholars Award, a Fulbright-Hays Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend, and a National Endowment for the Humanities Research Fellowship.

Casey Walsh received his PhD from the New School for Social Research. His specialization lies in sociocultural anthropology, specifically that of the Mexico-U.S. Borderlands. For the past 10 years he has studied the ways in which water, land and labor have organized to produce commodities in areas marked by aridity especially in Northern Mexico and SouthWestern U.S.